

# Regulating Ultra-processed Foods: Lessons from San Francisco and Beyond

## About the Guest Speakers and Moderator

### Opening Remarks:



**Nicholas Freudenberg** is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Public Health at the CUNY School of Public Health and the founding director and now senior faculty fellow at the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute.

His previous book was *At What Cost Modern Capitalism and the Future of Health* (2022) and his forthcoming (September 2026) book is *Fighting for New York Health and Social Justice Activism since the 1960s*.

### Guest Panelists:



**David Chiu** is the 15th City Attorney of San Francisco. David Chiu leads one of the nation's top municipal law offices, providing legal counsel to the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, and over 100 city departments

and boards. Previously, David served seven years in the California State Legislature and six years as President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors – the first Asian American to hold each position and author of 185 state and local laws.

Under David's leadership, his office secured a \$350 million opioid settlement against the opioid industry, successfully fought to keep open California's largest skilled nursing facility, recovered tens of millions for wage theft victims, held tobacco and fossil fuel companies accountable, and shut down 11 of the world's largest websites distributing AI-generated nonconsensual pornography. The City Attorney recently announced a first-of-its-kind lawsuit against some of the nation's largest ultra-processed food manufacturers for creating a public health crisis through product engineering and targeted marketing.

Before entering elected office, David worked as a civil rights attorney, criminal prosecutor, Democratic Counsel to the U.S. Senate Constitution Subcommittee, federal appellate law clerk, and co-founder of a public affairs technology company. The son of immigrants, he received his undergraduate and master's in public policy and law degrees from Harvard.



**Jennifer L. Pomeranz** is a public health lawyer and Associate Professor at the School of Global Public Health at New York University. Her research focuses on public health law and policy with a focus on the

food environment. She is the first author of the textbook *Public Health Law in Practice* and the author of *Food Law for Public Health*, both published by Oxford University Press. Ms. Pomeranz has published over one-hundred articles in the leading peer review journals and has served on health and food-related advisory committees for New York City and non-profit organizations and was a member of an ad hoc Committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. She earned her Juris Doctorate from Cornell Law School and Master of Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health.



**Mikateko Mafuyeka** is the Legal Advisor for Africa at the Global Health Advocacy Incubator. She is an admitted legal practitioner in the High Court of South Africa and has previously worked in the

Presidency, Wits School of Public Health as a Senior Researcher and Public Health lawyer. She has also held positions as a practicing legal practitioner and Law lecturer. She has an LLB and LLM from the University of Pretoria. Her work is in Law, policy, and health analysis.

### Moderator:



**Dr. Jennifer Cadenhead**, an assistant professor at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy and registered dietitian nutritionist, conducts behavioral

nutrition science to advance health equity through food policy. Her work focuses on diet patterns, particularly ultra-processed foods consumption, and health. She also studies school meal policies and dietary behaviors to promote nutrition security and mitigate chronic disease, with an emphasis on underserved communities. She seeks to provide critical insights through translating research for community members, advocates, educators and policy makers.

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**About the forum:** The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute is hosting an online forum event on February 12, 2026, from 2:00-3:30 PM ET, examining the high-profile lawsuit brought by the City of San Francisco against manufacturers of ultra-processed foods and its broader implications for public health policy. Featuring legal, public health, and policy experts, the forum will explore how litigation may shape future approaches to regulating ultra-processed foods at the local, national, and global levels. The discussion will consider accountability, regulatory authority, and lessons from related policy efforts in the United States and internationally. The event will be moderated by CUNY SPH Professor Dr. Jen Cadenhead and will include San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu, Professor Jennifer Pomeranz (NYU), and Mikateko Mafuyeka (GHAI).

## Additional Resources:

- Baker, P., Slater, S., White, M., Wood, B., Contreras, A., Corvalán, C., ... & Barquera, S. (2025). [Towards unified global action on ultra-processed foods: understanding commercial determinants, countering corporate power, and mobilising a public health response](#). *The Lancet*, 406(10520), 2703-2726.
- Cadenhead, J. W., Martínez-Steele, E., Contento, I., Kushi, L. H., Lee, A. R., Nguyen, T. T. T., ... & Wolf, R. L. (2023). [Diet quality, ultra-processed food consumption, and quality of life in a cross-sectional cohort of adults and teens with celiac disease](#). *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics*, 36(4), 1144-1158.
- Cadenhead, J., Steele, E. M., Contento, I., Lebowitz, B., Green, P., & Wolf, R. (2021). [P9 Are Ultra-Processed Foods or Diet Quality Associated with Quality of Life Among Those with Celiac Disease or Other Americans?](#). *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 53(7), S27-S28.
- CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute. [Resources on Resources on the Predatory Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages and its Impact on Nutritional Health](#)
- Freudenberg, N. (2014). [Lethal but Legal: Corporations, Consumption, and Protecting Public Health](#). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press
- Freudenberg, N. (2021). [At what cost: modern capitalism and the future of health](#). Oxford University Press.
- Kruger, P., Mafuyeka, M., & Karim, S. A. (2022). [The right to free commercial speech in south africa and its tension with public health interventions](#). *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 50(2), 317-321.
- Kruger, P., Wynberg, R., Mafuyeka, M., Laar, A., Mialon, M., Lake, L., Witten, C., Nisbett, N., Baker, P., & Hofman, K. (2023). [The ultra-processed food industry in Africa](#). *Nature Food*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-023-00802-0>
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- Lane, M. M., Gamage, E., Du, S., Ashtree, D. N., McGuinness, A. J., Gauci, S., Baker, P., Lawrence, M., Rebholz, C. M., Srour, B., Touvier, M., Jacka, F. N., O'Neil, A., Segasby, T., & Marx, W. (2024). [Ultra-processed food exposure and adverse health outcomes: Umbrella review of epidemiological meta-analyses](#). *BMJ*, 384, e077310.
- Pomeranz, J. L. (2015). [Food law for public health](#). Oxford University Press.
- Pomeranz, J. L., Cash, S. B., & Mozaffarian, D. (2023). [US Policies That Define Foods for Junk Food Taxes, 1991–2021](#). *The Milbank Quarterly*, 101(2), 560-600.
- Pomeranz, J. L., Mande, J. R., & Mozaffarian, D. (2023). [US Policies addressing ultraprocessed foods, 1980–2022](#). *American journal of preventive medicine*, 65(6), 1134-1141.
- Pomeranz, J. L., Wilde, P., Huang, Y., Micha, R., & Mozaffarian, D. (2018). [Legal and administrative feasibility of a federal junk food and sugar-sweetened beverage tax to improve diet](#). *American journal of public health*, 108(2), 203-209.
- Pomeranz, J. L., Zellers, L., Bare, M., & Pertschuk, M. (2019). [State preemption of food and nutrition policies and litigation: undermining government's role in public health](#). *American journal of preventive medicine*, 56(1), 47-57.
- Pomeranz, J. L., & Brownell, K. D. (2011). [Advancing public health obesity policy through state attorneys general](#). *American journal of public health*, 101(3), 425-431.
- San Francisco Office of the City Attorney (December 2, 2025), [San Francisco City Attorney Chiu sues largest manufacturers of ultra-processed foods](#).
- The Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), <https://www.advocacyincubator.org/>
- Wang, L., Martínez Steele, E., Du, M., Pomeranz, J. L., O'Connor, L. E., Herrick, K. A., ... & Zhang, F. F. (2021). [Trends in consumption of ultraprocessed foods among US youths aged 2-19 years, 1999-2018](#). *JAMA*, 326(6), 519-530.
- Willmoth, H. (December 11, 2024) [Lawsuit Claims 'Addictive' Food Deliberately Sold to Kids by Industry Giants](#), Newsweek.